

February 20, 2017

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Miner, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Flexer, Vice Chair Gresko, Vice Chair Somers, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Please accept this public hearing testimony in OPPOSITION to SB 832.

My name is Lori Ratchelous. I am a registered voter and reside in Cheshire, CT. I run a non profit trap, neuter and return (TNR) program for the past 11 years. Prior to that I volunteered with Forgotten Felines in Westbrook, CT doing TNR.

I was dismayed at learning about bill SB 832 for many reasons. I care about the welfare of animals and their humane treatment.

SB 832 does not address the major sources of habituation such as garbage and pet food left outside. SB 832 also does not serve to address the issue that more wildlife is killed as a result of human activity such as putting chemical and other forms of pollution into the environment.

SB 832 would unfairly punish community cat caregivers that provide a public service at oftentimes great personal expense, reducing cat overpopulation through TNR (trap, neuter, return) programs, a science-based approach that has been proven effective. Without this public service there would be an immediate overpopulation of stray and feral cats. TNR programs have worked tirelessly for years to reduce the overpopulation by raising money through fundraising to prevent litters of unwanted kittens from being born. TNR programs provide education to schools, Boy and Girl Scouts, senior citizen communities and other community based programs. Education is a large piece of the puzzle in reducing stray and feral cats. Education also includes informing the community about low cost spay/neuter clinics in addition to the free programs available through many non-profit TNR organizations.

It should also be noted that not feeding the stray or feral cats you are only making the cats look for other sources of food which could include other animals. This is a band aid to a problem. This will not reduce the number of stray or feral cats but increase the problem. Money and energy should be spent elsewhere and not by supporting a bill that will have no impact on helping to reduce the number of stray and feral cats. This bill is not a solution but instead it serves as a way to hinder what all TNR programs have successfully been doing for years which is to help control the stray and feral cat populations.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Kind Regards,

Lori Ratchelous  
Friends of Feral Cheshire Cats